

(a) whether the Committee constituted in May, 1990 to examine the feasibility of the laying of pipeline for the supply of natural gas in South India has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the said Committees; and

(c) the action taken to implement the recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (c). The report of the Committee has been received, and is being examined.

[English]

Hiring of Rigs

9380. SHRI S.B. THORAT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of rigs hired by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission during each of the last three years;

(b) the details of companies and contract rate on which these are hired;

(c) the amount paid during the said period; and

(d) the details of dues still pending and the action proposed to be taken to clear the dues?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Different number of rigs operate under charter hire at different points of time. As on 1.5.1992, 30 rigs were in charter hire.

(b) and (c). These rigs were hired from

both foreign and Indian companies at varying rates ranging from about US\$ 7000 to US\$ 29000 per day. The total amount paid during the last 3 years for these rigs works out to about Rs. 899 crores.

(d) A total of about Rs. 35 crores of dues are still outstanding for various reasons. The dues are expected to be cleared very early.

LPG Cylinders

9381. SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Foraging for LPG cylinders" appearing in the Indian Express (Vijayawada Edition) dated January 28, 1992;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and whether an enquiry has been conducted into the matter;

(c) if so, the action taken against the persons found guilty; and

(d) the measures taken to protect the interests of the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c): IOE and BPC have carried out investigations with reference to this news item. No specific case of malpractice by the dealers has been established. It has been reported by these two companies that they have taken various steps to ensure adequate availability of LPG refills promptly in Vijayawada.

(d) Regular and surprise inspections are being constantly carried out to monitor the working of the LPG Distributors.